

**Testimony of**

**Helen B. Cieslowski, Vice President  
New Britain Federation of Paraprofessionals, AFT Local 2407**

**H.B. 5465 An Act Concerning Family Medical Leave Benefits for  
Certain Municipal Employees**

**Labor and Public Employees Committee  
February 1, 2011**

**Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Helen Cieslowski and I am the Vice President of the New Britain Federation of Paraprofessionals, AFT Local 2407. I am a classroom inclusion para, working with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. There are 30-31 students in each classroom and I travel from class to class all day long.**

**I am currently in need of a knee replacement and am suffering with the constant pain associated with walking to these classes with bone on bone pain. I would like to have my knee surgery done as soon as possible but I do not qualify for FMLA! The paras are full time hourly employees working 10 months of the year.**

**I do not qualify for FMLA and am fearful of taking the 5 to 6 weeks needed for the surgery. I need my income from my job and even more so, I would be fearful of losing my job due to the time taken for the surgery.**

**I love working with my students and feel that I do them a disservice by being in school in pain all the time. The middle school teachers and students rely on paras for academic support.**

**I implore you to consider passing this bill to allow paraprofessionals the opportunity to be eligible for FMLA.**

**I appreciate your time and efforts in listening to and hopefully realizing how important this legislation is to a major group of your constituents.**